in open market at twice the rates approved by Government;

(c) what action has been taken against the guilty under DPCO; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to identify and control the resources from which such material has come into the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) to (d) Though there were reports of shortage of Vitamin C in the past, the situation has since improved and off late there have been no major complaints in this regard.

Certain complaints of overcharging in the prices of bulk Vitamin C were received in the past but the same were not substantiated. These have been referred to the concerned State Drug Controllers, for necessary action under the DPCO '87.

Short supply of drugs

1885. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether many drugs in the market are in short supply and prices of some of the drugs have gone up during the past few days;

(b) whether a number of drugs are not available in the market as the costs of raw material have increased following the Budget;

(c) if so, the details of the drugs which are in short supply in the market; and

(d) the steps taken to make them available at reasonable prices for the masses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Prices revision by the Government in case of price controlled formulations and by the manufacturers in case of non-scheduled formulations is an on-going process. The number of formulations in various pack sizes and dosage forms runs into thousands.

Shortages do get reported from time to time but the scrutiny of these reports reveals that the shortages in majority of cases, are of particular brands only for which alternative brand or therapeutic equivalents are available.

(b) No instance of non availability of a drug because of high costs of raw material has come to the notice of the Government.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Ensuring abundant availability, at reasonable prices, of essential life saving and prophyiactic medicine of good quality is the main objective of the existing Drug Policy. In the current exercise of review of the Drug Policy also, this objective has been kept uppermost in mind.

Ammonia/Urea plants based on Bombay High Gas

1886. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since approved the technical consultancy arrangements for Ammonia/Urea plants based on Bombay High Gas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the criteria for engaging such foreign consultants; and

(d) the details of the technical competence of the consultancy firm and their relevance to Indian conditions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) No technical consultancy agreement for ammonia/urea plants based on Bombay High gas has recently been submitted to Government for approval.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.